(c) Both the Governments are interacting on regular basis towards enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Following the signing of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement in 1992 and creation of bilateral inter Government Commission on Trade, Economic, Science, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, a series of agreements between the two countries have been signed and number of mechanisms have been set up to promote trade and economic cooperation. Steps have also been taken to enlarge Indo-Russian trade on consignment export basis through the warehouses and also ensuring greater presence of Indian banks in Russia. Both sides are also making efforts to promote bilateral trade through participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, exchange of trade information, etc.

Paper Industry

3243. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the paper industry at present is not progressing well;

(b) whether paper industry need heavy amount to meet growing demand of paper and paper board in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the extent to which the Government is likely to provide sufficient funds to boost the paper production in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No,Sir. The country is broadly self-sufficient in the Production of paper.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. The per capita consumption of paper in the country is expected to go up from 32 kgs to 5 kgs by the end of the century. On the basis of letters of intent (LOIs) issued and Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandums (IEMs) filed, it is expected that an additional capacity of 19.96 lakh tonnes would be available to meet this growing demand.

(d) Under the existing policy dispensation, the paper industry is not reserved for public sector. The industry is also partially de-licenced. Investments are made by entrepreneurs based on their commercial perceptions.

Import of Coal

3244. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the details of import of coal made by various power houses in the country during the last one year;

(b) whether the import of coal by power houses were made without utilising the coal from indigeneous coal fields; and

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof and the action the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) As per the information made available by the Central Electricity Authority, a total of 1.831 million tonnes of imported coal was received by the power houses of Tamil Nadu in the year 1995-96. Another 1.332 million tonnes of imported coal has been received by these power stations in the year 1996-97.

(b) and (c). Under the present Export and Import Policy, coal can be freely imported into the country. Such imports of coal if any, are made by the consumers themselves considering their needs and exercising their own commercial judgement. The national coal companies are in a position to meet the entire requirements of the power stations in Tamil Nadu and adequate allocation to meet the entire requirements of these power stations are being maintained from indigenous sources.

Subsidy to Integrated Rural Development Programme

3245. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of bank credit and Government subsidy provided to each State for the implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme since its inception;

(b) the total number of families benefited therefrom till September, 1996;

(c) whether the impact of the programme had been uneven in regard to alleviation of poverty;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that the State-wise amounts of bank credit and Government subsidy under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) since its inception are not available with them. However, since the inception IRDP, bank credit of Rs. 16,797.86 crores and Government subsidy amounting to Rs. 10,550.56 crores, aggregating Rs. 27,348.42 crores had been provided to 494.98 lakh families below poverty line, till the end of September, 1996.

(c) and (d). The High Level Expert Committee on IRDP under the Chairmanship of Shri D.R. Mehta, former Deputy Government of RBI, has observed that large scale under-financing of IRDP beneficiaries in the initial years of the programme resulted in sub-optimal utilisation of assets and inadequate income generation which, in turn, had an uneven and adverse impact on the quality of lending in general and on recovery in particular.